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ABSTRACT

To determine degree of local support for industrialization as a means of rural economic development, leaders and influentials in three South Carolina counties were interviewed in 1977. Each was asked to define "development" and to list and rank three aspects of his county he especially liked and its most important needs or problems. Responses mentioning industrialization, lack or excess of it, and its favorable or unfavorable connotations were coded for analysis. About one-half of the respondents listed some aspect of industrialization in their definitions of development, with respondents from Kershaw (the county having the highest socioeconomic indicators and industrialized since World War II) perceiving the strongest relationship. Of the 35.7% of all respondents who believed lack of industry to be a problem, 19.4% ranked it the most serious problem. Variations by county, however, were evident. Substantial direct support for industrialization surfaced in Kershaw County, which has a balanced economic base. Williamsburg County, with an agricultural economic base, showed weak direct support for industrialization, though substantial interactional and organizational support existed for it. Both direct and indirect support in Union County, where economy is tied to forest products and textile manufacturing, was meager. (RS)

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SUPPORT FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION AS A MEANS TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The terms, community development and rural development, in theory vary in definition, but in practice are commonly accepted as desirable and useful. Definitional criteria for development include improvement in the quality of life for inhabitants of the given geographic areas. Social and economic indicators, particularly occupational opportunities, education, and personal and family income, are given high priority. In the past, scholars and practitioners have emphasized improvement of occupational opportunities, viz., the addition of new jobs. This often meant that a new employing firm or firms were brought into the rural community. Social scientists, development practitioners, and local residents seemed to agree that this was right and proper. The seemingly logical assumption was, that as rural farm population declined, employment must be created to maintain the rural population (Cavender and Schmitt, 1971).

Only those marching to a different drummer -- a few artists, environmentalists, and Jeffersonian agrarians -- questioned these trends. Occasionally, social scientists raised their voices but were decisively labeled as conservative or belonging to one or more of the above three categories. Consequently, little research has been conducted to determine the costs and benefits of rural industrialization, and only recently have agricultural economists extended their expertise to this endeavor (Shaffer and Tweeten, 1974).

Rural sociologists have considered this topic (cf., Bertrand and Osborne, 1960; Sizer and Clifford, 1966), but the substantial contributions have been provided by Gene F. Summers and his associates (see REFERENCES), who

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postulated that rural industrialization may not benefit (economic, social, cultural, ecological, political) rural areas. These researchers, at the University of Wisconsin, received a grant from the Economic Development Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, to conduct research on this topic, which was completed in 1975. A very brief summary of this project follows:

One purpose of the research was to synthesize studies of industrialization in rural areas. One hundred such studies were examined, representing the construction of 700 manufacturing plants, at 245 locations, in 34 states, between the years of 1945 and 1973. An overview of this synthesis:

(a) There is no evidence that industrial development increases the level of educational attainment in the host community. Where it does occur the evidence suggests it is due to changes in the age structure because younger adults generally have completed more years of schooling.

(b) New jobs often do not go to the local unemployed, underemployed, minorities and marginally employable persons likely to be near or below the poverty level.

(c) High-skill, high-wage industries which are most likely to increase the aggregate income and raise the percentage of families above the poverty level, are least likely to hire local disadvantaged. Low-skill, low-wage industries are more likely to employ the disadvantaged.

(d) Industrial firms often are offered inducements by the local community to encourage their choice of the community as a plant site.

(e) Increase in the fiscal resource base of the local community often is outweighed by increased costs of providing services to the new industry and the community.

(f) Net fiscal gains to the local government do occur. This usually is when a) no local subsidy was offered the industry, b) the plant work force is hired locally, or c) large proportions of the plant work force live outside the community and commute to work.

(g) Where new industry is accompanied by population growth it often strains existing basic delivery systems. Anticipated benefits to the local

community generally exceed perceived benefits after development.

Policy recommendations were required as part of the United States Department of Commerce funding. An overview of the recommendations:

(1) Low-skill, low-wage industries should be encouraged to locate communities (areas) with a surplus of low-skill labor. This is viewed as a first stage of development to be followed by high-skill, high-wage industry. Where surplus labor is highly skilled as well, the two stages might well be executed simultaneously.

(2) Strain on a community's public services may be minimized by attracting a plant of suitable size; i.e., either one that makes few demands on existing facilities such as medical, police, and fire services, or one which is large enough to provide these for itself.

(3) A comprehensive labor survey in the early planning stages of location may help match supply and demand, The size, and skill levels of potential male and female employees should be documented.

(4) Firms locating in rural areas should be encouraged to subsidize unskilled and minority training programs, especially where a labor survey has shown a large potential supply of unskilled, racial minorities, and women.

(5) Since many rural industrial workers have young children, provision of schools and other child-oriented services such as day care centers are important. Assistance may be required to establish and expand these facilities in order to attract skilled workers and utilize local female labor.

(6) The pattern of population growth and residential location associated with industrial development in non-metropolitan areas is certain to exacerbate the taxation of agricultural land and further weaken the economic viability of farm enterprises. Hence, it is recommended that a national land use policy which safeguards the future of agricultural land be established.

The authors do not wish to imply that all employment opportunities and population growth in rural areas are bad. Employment, in association with the cultural and physical environmental assimilative capacities of given rural areas, may be desirable. People are relatively free to live where they choose in our society. Those persons desiring to live in rural areas, and possess the economic resources, should have the opportunity to do so. The issue explored here is one of knowledge; rural counties and communities do not know the consequences (particularly economic) of rural industrialization.

METHODOLOGY

The counties included in the research reported here (Kershaw, Union, Williamsburg) are study counties for the southern regional project S-120, Social Organization for the Development of Rural Counties. These counties were selected from criteria established by previous regional projects and centering on rural poverty indicators, and from criteria suggested by the South Carolina Cooperative Extension Service programs.

Respondents were selected by supervenient procedures. First, a list of positional community and county officials and leaders was prepared, utilizing regional project guidelines. The County Extension Leader (formal title) was consulted in generating this list. These leaders and officials were then asked to name individuals they felt to be involved and influential in three areas of concern: economic development, health facilities and services, and a specific and relevant issue or problem in each county.

Upon completion of this procedure, names which were mentioned more than twice by these respondents, were placed on a respondent list for each county. This list provided the names of those to be interviewed using the regional project questionnaire. In addition to the original names on the list, persons who were mentioned and ranked by the venial respondents, were also included in the sample to be interviewed.

Social scientists at Clemson University interviewed respondents in the three counties, July-December, 1977. Data are currently available for the following number of respondents from each county: Kershaw - 42, Union - 34, and Williamsburg - 22.

Responses to the following questions are used to derive direct support for industrialization as a means to rural development:

> "Would you please tell me what you think are three aspects of your County which you especially like?"

"What do you think are the most important needs or problems of your County?", and

"What does the term 'development' mean to you?"

Respondents ranked their answers to the first two questions, with respect to their importance, as well.

Responses mentioning industrialization, the lack or excess of it, and favorable or unfavorable connotations of it, (relative to each question), are coded either "no listing", or by their rank--whichever is applicable. For the question concerning "development", responses are coded as "no listing", mentioning industrialization singly, in conjunction with another or other items, or with an unfavorable connotation. Categories are considered mutually exclusive.

Indicators of indirect support for rural industrialization are tabulated from actual frequencies in response to questions concerning the number of organizations or agencies involved in the areas of our concern for each county. Additionally, actual frequencies of contacts that respondents maintain relative to their decisions concerning economic development, health development, and special interest areas are recorded. It is suggested that the greater the organization and contact frequencies in the economic development area (relative to other areas), then the greater is support for industrialization as a means to rural development.

Discussion of frequencies and percentages of data from the three counties follow. It is emphasized that objectives of the larger research project were not to determine support or lack of support for rural industrialization. Nevertheless, the authors believe that data from the survey research are useful for a preliminary investigation of this topic.

FINDINGS

Responses to the survey questions are presented in Appendix Tables 1 through 10. The questionnaire item most closely associated with the topic of this paper is that eliciting a definition of development. Response to this item will be discussed first (see Table 1). About one-half of the respondents do not (specifically) list industrial employing firms. The remaining responses do reveal a direct association with industrialization. One third of the respondents state industrialization and at least one additional definitional component for development. These findings indicate some but not overwhelming support for industrialization as a means to rural development.

Data from responses regarding favorable aspects of the respective counties are presented in Table 2. Considering aspects of the county that the respondents like, 90.8 percent do not state industry, employing firms, or equivalent responses. The respondents listing industry for this question are divided equally into ranks with three responses in each category.

Responses mentioning the need for, or lack of industry in the county, as one of the most important problems of the county, are presented in Table 3. While 64.3 percent of the respondents fail to perceive this as a problem, 19.4 feel it to be the most important problem in the county, 10.2 percent rank industrialization as second, and 6.1 percent as the third most important problem in the county. Table 4 reveals that only nine respondents believe that overdependence on industrialization is a problem in the county. Hence, the small percentage of respondents opposing industrialization certainly does not indicate a lack of support.

The authors have suggested that magnitude of organizations and individuals with whom respondents associate, may constitute indirect indicators of support for industrialization. Numbers of organizations, which are listed by respondents, for economic development, health, and specific issues, are presented in Table 5, Table 6, and Table 7, respectively. When comparing the organizations listed, those associated with health appear to be most dominant in the thoughts of the respondents. The median number of organizations listed per respondent for the three topics are: economic - 2.59; health - 2.98; and specific issues - 1.62.

Numbers of individuals, listed by respondents, for economic development, health, and specific issues, are presented in Table 8, Table 9, and Table 10, respectively. When respondents thought of associating with individuals, economic development was clearly most viable. The median number of individuals listed per respondent for the three topics are: economic - 7.90; health - 3.30; and specific issues - 3.42. Rural industrialization appears to be discussed in the social interaction of county influentials and leaders. Such interaction includes a wide range of inter-personal association, but is probably concentrated in occupational pursuits, formal associations, organizations, and agencies.

These results (interaction with individuals about economic development) suggest that rural industrialization is simply assumed to be important by influentials and leaders in rural counties. Thus, it may not be stated as a definitional component of development, as a favorable aspect of the county, or lack of development thought of as an unfavorable aspect.

Three South Carolina Counties

Data are tabulated for the three South Carolina counties included in this research. A very brief profile of each county will be presented in order to set the stage for further discussion. Kershaw County has respectable composite socio-economic indicators but pockets of rural poverty exist. The economic base includes substantial industrial, agricultural, and forest products sources. The industry is essentially post World War II.

Union County is in a traditional textile mill area and also has a forest products economic base. The socio-economic indicators are better than Williamsburg but poorer than Kershaw.

Williamsburg County is the most agricultural and rural of the three. There is some forestry and industrialization in the county, the latter being a relatively recent phenomenon.

Data by County

With respect to the responses regarding a defintion for development (Table 1), respondents from Kershaw are more likely to include industrialization in their definitions. A total of 61.9 percent of Kershaw County influentials and leaders include some aspect of industrialization in their definitions. Kershaw respondents are also more likely to list and rank industrialization as a favorable aspect of the county (Table 2). It is suggested that industrialization of the past thirty years, resulting in socio-economic improvement, may also contribute to further support for rural industrialization.

Respondents from Union County are more likely to consider both industrialization and lack of industrialization (more emphasis on the latter) as unfavorable aspects of their county (Table 3 and 4). It is apparent that some respondents do not favor dependence on the somewhat dilapidated textile industry. It is not clear whether respondents favor a diversification of employing firms or more modern textile industry. At any rate, only a few individuals support rural industrialization in such a county.

The organizations listed by respondents from the three counties, for economic development, are listed in Table 5. There is some tendency for Kershaw and Williamsburg respondents to list greater numbers of organizations. It appears that a more recent history of industrial development results in greater social organizational involvement. Union County, with textile dependence, appears to have a few concerned organizations.

Numbers of individuals listed by respondents from the three counties, for economic development, are presented in Table 8. Williamsburg County respondents are more likely to interact with many (i.e., more than nine) individuals about economic development. It appears that recent efforts toward rural industrialization result in substantial conversation about the topic, if not support for it. Union County respondents, again with textile dependence, appear to be avoiding conversation about the issue.

IMPLICATIONS

Historically, scholars, practitioners, and local influentials and leaders have favored rural industrialization as a means to rural development. Recently, this policy direction has been questioned (see references on page 9). Summers and his associates concluded that rural areas do not benefit from rural industrialization. The purpose of this paper is to determine the degree of support for rural industrialization, from influentials and leaders in three South Carolina counties. To reiterate, the purposes of the survey research was not to test this hypothesis; consequently, answers to the question at hand are but preliminary.

About one-half of the respondents list some aspect of industrialization in their definitions of development. Respondents from the county with highest socio-economic indicators and industrialized since World War II, are more likely to respond in this manner. A total of 35.7 percent of all respondents believe that lack of industry is a problem and 19.4 percent believe it to be the most serious problem in the country.

Kershaw County has a balanced economic base, industrial employing firms around its incorporated places, and respectable socio-economic indicators. The authors of this manuscript suggest that rural industrialization may not be needed in this county. There is, nevertheless, substantial direct support for rural industrialization in Kershaw County. It is concluded that recent and diversified industrialization has contributed to support for additional industrialization in this rural county.

Williamsburg County has an agricultural economic base but poverty has resulted, in part, from declining demand for farm labor. Selective rural industrialization would, perhaps, be appropriate for this county, and substantial interactional and organizational support exists for industrialization. Direct support is rather weak in this county, however

Union County has a forest products and textile manufacturing economic base. If rural industrialization is appropriate for any county, it would be this county. However, support, both direct and indirect, for rural industrialization, is meager in Union County.

The authors believe that a general indication of support for rural industrialization has been determined from the methodology and survey research reported here. It is also useful to report variation in response from the three respective counties.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Respondents' Definition of Development by County: Industrialization or Equivalent and No Listing of Industrialization

County		No Listing	Only Industry	Industry & Other Response	Industry Unfavorable Connotation	Total
Kershaw	#	16	2	19	5	42
	%	38.1	4.8	45.2	11.9	42.9
Union	#	22	3	9	0	34
	%	64.7	8.8	26.5	0.0	34.7
Williamsburg	#	13	4	5	0	22
	%	59.1	18.2	22.7	0.0	22.4
	#	51	9	33	5	98
Total	%	52.0	9.2	33.7	5.1	100.0

Table 2. Favorable Attributes of Respondents' Counties: Industrialization or Equivalent and No Listing of Industrialization

County		No Listing	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Total
Kershaw	#	35	3	2	2	42
	%	83.3	7.1	4.8	4.8	42.9
Union	#	32	0	1	1	34
	%	94.1	0.0	2.9	2.9	34.7
Williamsburg	#	22	0	0	0	22
	%	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.4
	#	89	3	3	3	98
Total	%	90.7	3.1	3.1	3.1	100.0

Table 3. Unfavorable Attributes of Respondents' Counties: Lack of Industrialization and No Listing

County		No Listing	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Total
Kershaw	#	34	3	2	3	42
	%	81.0	7.1	4.8	7.1	42.9
Union	#	13	12	7	2	34
	%	38.2	35.3	20.6	5.9	34.7
Williamsburg	#	16	4	1	1	22
	%	72.7	18.2	4.5	4.5	22.4
	#	63	19	10	6	98
Total	%	64.3	19.4	10.2	6.1	100.0

Table 4. Unfavorable Attributes of Respondents' Counties: Industrialization or Equivalent and No Listing

County		No Listing	Rank 1	Rank 2	Rank 3	Total
Kershaw	#	41	1	0	0	42
	%	97.6	2.4	0.0	0.0	42.9
Union	#	26	6	2	0	34
	%	76.5	17.6	5.9	0.0	34.7
Williamsburg	#	22	0	0	0	22
	%	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	22.4
	#	89	7	2	0	98
Total	%	90.0	7.1	2.0	0.0	100.0

Table 5. Number of Organizations Listed for Economic Development by County

County		None	1	2	3	4	5-7	Total
Kershaw	#	2	5	9	11	11	4	42
	%	4.8	11.9	21.4	26.2	26.2	9.5	42.9
Union	#	1	10	9	8	6	0	34
	%	2.9	29.4	26.5	23.5	17.6	0.0	34.7
Williamsburg	#	1	3	7	3	3	5	22
	%	4.5	13.6	31.8	13.6	13.6	22.7	22.4
	#	4	18	25	22	20	9	98
Total	%	4.1	18.4	25.5	22.4	20.4	9.2	100.0

Table 6. Number of Organizations Listed for Health by County

County		None	1	2	3	4	5-8	Total
Kershaw	#	1	1	8	10	13	9	42
	%	2.4	2.4	19.0	23.8	31.0	21.4	42.9
Union	#	4	7	5	10	5	3	34
	%	11.8	20.6	14.7	29.4	14.7	8.8	34.7
Williamsburg	#	5	1	5	5	4	2	22
	%	22.7	4.5	22.7	22.7	18.2	9.1	22.4
	#	10	9	18	25	22	14	98
Total	%	10.2	9.2	18.4	25.5	22.4	14.3	100.0

Table 7. Number of Organizations Listed for Specific Issue or Topic by County

County		None	1	2	3	4	5-6	Total
Kershaw	#	8	4	16	5	5	4	42
	%	19.0	9.5	38.1	11.9	11.9	9.5	42.9
Union	#	8	11	6	3	4	2	34
	%	23.5	32.4	17.6	8.8	11.8	5.9	34.7
Williamsburg	#	9	6	3	0	0	4	22
	%	40.9	27.3	13.6	0.0	0.0	18.2	22.4
	#	25	21	25	8	9	10	98
Total	%	25.5	21.4	25.5	8.2	9.2	10.2	100.0

Table 8. Number of Individual Contacts for Economic Development by County

County		None	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-18	19-35	Total
Kershaw	#	5	12	12	9	2	2	42
	%	11.9	28.6	28.6	21.4	4.8	4.8	42.9
Union	#	9	4	5	3	9	4	34
	%	26.5	11.8	14.7	8.8	26.5	11.8	34.7
Williamsburg	#	2	1	2	5	2	10	32
	%	9.1	4.5	9.1	22.7	9.1	45.5	22.4
	#	16	17	19	17	13	16	98
Total	%	16.3	17.3	19.5	17.3	13.3	16.3	100.0

Table 9. Number of Individual Contacts for Health by County

County		None	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-18	19-35	Total
Kershaw	#	14	20	7	1	0	0	42
	%	33.3	47.6	16.7	2.4	0.0	0.0	42.9
Union	#	4	13	9	6	0	2	34
	%	11.8	38.2	26.5	17.6	0.0	5.9	34.7
Williamsburg	#	1	11	3	4	2	1	22
	%	4.5	50.0	13.6	18.2	9.1	4.5	22.4
	#	19	44	19	11	2	3	98
Total	%	19.4	44.9	19.4	11.2	2.0	3.1	100.0

Table 10. Number of Individual Contacts for Specific Issue or Topic by County

County		None	1-4	5-8	9-12	13-18	19-35	Total
Kershaw	#	14	18	7	3	0	0	42
	%	33.3	42.9	16.7	7.1	0.0	0.0	42.9
Union	#	8	3	5	4	9	5	34.7
	%	23.5	8.8	14.7	11.8	26.5	14.7	34.7
Williamsburg	#	4	7	5	3	2	1	22
	%	18.2	31.8	22.7	13.6	9.1	4.5	22.4
	#	26	28	17	10	11	6	98
Total	%	26.5	28.7	17.3	10.2	11.2	6.1	100.0